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This past October, nursing representatives from McLean Hospital traveled to Phoenix, Arizona, for the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) 31st Annual Conference. The APNA annual conferences are the largest gatherings of psychiatric mental health (PMH) nurses in the United States and are regarded as the premier event for psychiatric nursing.

This year’s event did not disappoint. The conference theme, “Whole Health Begins with Mental Health,” focused on opportunities for PMH nurses to infuse mental health recovery and wellness into their practice and showcased innovative best practices to improve the mental health of the population. This theme resonated with the McLean nurses in attendance, with many presenting their work targeted at improving the care and lives of individuals receiving mental health services.

Linda M. Flaherty, RN, PMHCNS-BC, vice president for Patient Care Services, showcased McLean’s Interdisciplinary Recovery to Practice Committee (IROP) with her poster describing the committee’s development of a Recovery to Practice toolkit, designed to translate recovery principles into practice and treatment settings. Kelly A. Carlson, PhD, PMHNP-BC, and Maria T. Olivier, MSN, RN, presented their poster, “Trauma-Informed Care: Philosophy, Culture, and Experience,” which is based on a program incorporated in the IROP toolkit. Olivier described the presentation as “a universal approach to both patients and staff that recognizes that our current interactions have the opportunity to promote recovery through trauma-informed care.”

A collaborative nursing study was presented by McLean’s Nicole Visaggio, BSN, RN, and Fairfield University’s Kathryn E. Phillips, PhD, APRN, NP-BC, along with representatives from Butler Hospital and the Institute of Living. This retrospective chart review examined cases of seclusion and restraint at the three institutions to contribute to the overall goal of improving safety while identifying the unique needs of psychiatric patients in intensive treatment.

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2017 APNA CONFERENCE
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McLean’s Psychiatric Neurotherapeutics Program nurses presented their work in transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Teresa Henderson, BSN, RN, and Paula Bolton, MS, CNP, ANP-BC, shared the success of McLean’s ECT support groups, which are designed to instill hope and empower members in their recovery process. In addition, Bolton co-presented a talk with Donna Ecklesdafer, MSN, RN, from Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services. Their lecture focused on the different mechanisms of action of brain stimulation therapies, including ECT, as well as the new research findings on ECT and the vital role of the PMH nurse. Cecilia Rush, BSN, RN, and Dawn Miller, BSN, RN, presented their poster, “TMS and the Challenges for Nursing,” which described the instrumental role nurses play in the caring for patients being treated with TMS.

In addition to presenting at the conference, McLean has an enduring connection with the APNA that includes a proud history of active participation in the organization’s operations through involvement in its councils, committees, and task forces. This year, McLean had two attendees who are serving in leadership roles with the APNA. Kristen Kichefski, MSN, MBA, RN-BC, was in attendance as immediate-past president of the APNA New England Chapter, representing the region at chapter meetings and networking events in addition to presenting her work in staff engagement on an intensive treatment unit. Christine Tebaldi, MS, PMHNP-BC, was in attendance, serving in her role as member-at-large and chapter liaison on the APNA Board of Directors. In addition to her duties as a board member, she served as the conference ambassador to the president of the Emergency Nurses Association. On the final day of the conference, Tebaldi was joined by fellow board members as they presented an Ignite session focused on the conference theme and how it relates to psychiatric-mental health nursing practice, administration, education, and research.

APNA PRESENTATIONS FEATURING McLEAN NURSES

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RECOVERY IN MOTION: 2017 FALL NURSING CONFERENCE

On September 29, McLean held its 2017 Fall Nursing Conference in Pierce Hall. This year’s conference, titled “Recovery in Motion,” focused on bridging the connection between mental health and physical health. McLean Nursing was honored to host Dixie L. Thompson, PhD, and Lora Humphrey Beebe, PhD, PMHNP-BC, FAAN, from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, as guest speakers for the event.

Thompson is vice provost and dean of the Graduate School at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Thompson’s research centers on the health impact of regular physical activity, particularly in women. Her work has contributed to the knowledge that important health changes can result when inactive women add walking to their daily routine. Thompson’s work has shown favorable results in decreasing blood pressure, improving glucose control, and promoting weight loss in her participants. She is currently part of a federally funded research group aimed at training teams of students from various disciplines to assist patients with multiple chronic conditions, including schizophrenia spectrum disorder, to develop health and wellness plans. These interdisciplinary teams include representatives from exercise physiology, nutrition, psychiatric nursing, and pharmacy. Beebe is a professor at the College of Nursing and coordinator of the Graduate Concentration in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her research focuses on adherence and motivation and their relationships to the physical and mental health of persons with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. Beebe is currently the principal investigator on a federally funded education research project titled “Recovery-Based Interprofessional Distance Education.”

At the September 29 event, Beebe and Thompson presented topics such as “Barriers to Health on the Schizophrenia Spectrum” and “Educational Strategies to Provide Interdisciplinary Holistic care.” Additional presentations focused on improving physical health and adherence and assisting individuals to “stay the course.” The full day of lectures was attended by 64 nurses from McLean as well as social work, psychology, and psychical therapy representatives. McLean Nursing proudly hosts a spring conference and a fall conference each year. These events feature current, evidence-based education that supports and advances nursing care at McLean Hospital.

“The recovery process places the patient in an equalizing position with the nurse so they can become true partners in the work of learning about how they can live a happy, healthy life. The patient wins, not the illness.”

—Darlyn Scott, MSN, RN-BC

BELOW Lora Humphrey Beebe speaks at the McLean 2017 Fall Nursing Conference held on September 29 in Pierce Hall.
In July, several McLean clinicians—including Nicole Visaggio, RN, clinical coordinator on AB2 North—received a crash course in behavioral health policymaking during a one-day trip to Washington, DC. There, they met with various players in the policy arena, including representatives from the executive branch.

The trip was the inaugural event of the new McLean Policy Educational Initiative, a new effort to introduce an interdisciplinary cohort of trainees, fellows, and early-career faculty to the behavioral health policy ecosystem at the federal and state level. Its goal is to develop more policymaking capacity among clinicians and researchers.

“It empowered me to become a voice for a group whose voices are seldom heard and to advocate for change to improve the lives of these individuals on a more global scale.”

For Visaggio, the trip was eye-opening and motivating. “It empowered me to become a voice for a group whose voices are seldom heard and to advocate for change to improve the lives of these individuals on a more global scale,” she said. “At this point in my career, I am ready to broaden my scope of practice and advocate for system-wide change.”

This month, Visaggio and the rest of the cohort will begin a four-session seminar when they will debrief from the Washington, DC, trip, learn about the state of healthcare reform, and dig deeper into behavioral health issues each wishes to pursue in the future from a policy standpoint. Leary is also hoping to include a trip to the Massachusetts State House, where cohort members will learn about the inner workings of state healthcare policymaking. Longer-term plans for the initiative include educational opportunities for researchers, teaching them how to translate their research papers into “policy-relevant” communications, as Leary puts it.

Leary has piloted the McLean Policy Educational Initiative in close coordination with McLean’s Office of the CEO and Partners HealthCare’s Office of Government Affairs. The other McLean Policy Educational Initiative participants this year are Katherine A. Koh, MD, Jessica M. Margolis, MSW, MPH, and Peggy M. Worden, PsyD.

Jane E. Crone, BSN, RN, is never afraid to advocate for her colleagues and her patients. In her quiet way, she will speak up when she believes someone is being treated unfairly. A natural teacher, Crone is her unit’s CPR instructor, its EMR expert, and an exceptional clinician who models top-quality nursing care. For these reasons and many more, Crone, the clinical coordinator for McLean’s Cognitive Neuropsychiatry Program (SB2), was recently awarded the Marguerite Conrad Award for Teaching and Mentoring at the fall nursing conference.

“Jane teaches in real time and often by example—whether it’s wound care or how to calm an agitated patient—and she is the nurse you want to have in your corner,” said Anne Huntington, MSN, RN-BC, nursing director for SB2, the geriatric neuropsychiatry unit. “People have confidence in her—she follows up, she takes care of things.” And no request is too small for Crone when it comes to her patients. She is the nurse who will go looking for a lost object or ensure that a patient’s wish for a special food is fulfilled.

Crone is also adept at defusing tense situations, according to Huntington, who recalled the time an elderly patient with dementia was giving her husband a hard time. Crone took him out for ice cream to give both spouses a breather. For patients nearing the end of their lives, Crone creates a soothing space for them and their families. “She’ll get the aromatherapy diffuser going, put on music, and make sure they have skin cream and mouth care products so they’re as physically comfortable as possible,” explained Huntington. “And for the families, she’s a good listener and very comforting.”

Crone also models the importance of continually upgrading one’s skills and will graduate in the spring with a master’s degree in nursing through Framingham State University’s Leadership and Management program. “I hope she someday has a unit of her own, but in the meantime, she is my right-hand woman, my eyes and ears when I’m not around, and she makes my job a lot easier,” said Huntington.